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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

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STERILIZATION OF CATHETERS.—An article in the *Medical News* on the sterilization of catheters says the authors found (1) soft-rubber catheters could not be completely sterilized by boiling in less than four and a half minutes; (2) mechanical cleansing [*e.g.*, by means of cotton wound around an applicator] rendered sterilization easier and effectual in a shorter time; (3) boiling soft-rubber catheters for five minutes or over roughened them and diminished their elasticity and strength; (4) immersing for five minutes in bichloride solution did not sterilize an infected catheter; (5) chemical sterilization should not be used for a catheter that is to be retained in the bladder for any length of time; (6) formalin vapor will sterilize infected instruments in twenty-four hours; (7) all methods of sterilization commonly employed should be continued for much longer periods than the minimum time required for destruction of germs in a laboratory; (8) English web catheters can be more readily sterilized by heat than can soft-rubber ones, probably on account of their interior construction.

VACCINATION.—Dr. Frederick A. Packard in the *Philadelphia Medical Journal* advises the use of glycerized vaccine kept in hermetically sealed tubes and of a special scarificator. The ideal result of the scarification is a little pinkish or rosy moisture. Any form of shield that absolutely prevents the radiation of heat from the surrounding skin is to be objected to. As soon as the vaccination has taken, the shield should be removed and the arm dressed with boric-acid ointment. The rational treatment in cases where the arm is really sore is to cover the area with an antiseptic poultice, gauze soaked in bichloride solution, one to three thousand.

TREATMENT OF ACUTE INSANITY IN PRIVATE PRACTICE.—Dr. C. Eugene Riggs says in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "I am convinced that home care in properly selected cases will shorten the length of an attack by a period varying from a few weeks to several months." He considers nutrition of great importance and milk and eggs the best nourishment. Full feeding in puerperal cases will quiet patients when hypnotics and sedatives have proved useless. He thinks that massage materially assists digestion. Iron is advised, and whiskey and strychnine are used to control excitement. Restraint must be used at times. Care should be taken during convalescence when there is a suicidal tendency to prevent a fatal result. Under certain conditions and in selected cases travel is an important factor in recovery.

INFANT FEEDING.—Dr. Louis Fischer in the *Medical News* objects to sterilized or strained milk as infants' food because of the chemical changes produced by the process. Such milk lacks the element of freshness. Oppenheimer has proved

by experiment that the albumin in milk is decomposed, as shown by the liberation of sulphuretted hydrogen after milk is heated for five minutes or longer in a strainer. The ideal milk is a raw milk, he says, that has been secured from a reliable dairy in which modern sanitary laws are so applied that the hygienic condition of the cow's stable is perfect.

LEFT-HANDEDNESS.—The Philadelphia *Medical Journal* says that Lüddickens claims left-handedness is not a habit but is always due to physiological causes, and often an expression of the influence of heredity. Normally the blood-pressure is greater on the left side of the brain than on the right side. When this pressure is stronger on the right side left-handedness is the result. He thinks all attempts to overcome it should be stopped, as a high degree of efficiency upon that side may be acquired.

MILDNESS OF SMALL-POX EPIDEMIC.—Dr. S. L. Jepson, in notes on small-pox in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, observes the mildness of the small-pox that has prevailed so generally during the last two years. The primary fever is mild, sometimes passing unobserved, the secondary fever is often absent, and in many cases the eruption is very sparse, drying up without passing through the usual stages. But one death, that of an infant, occurred in seventy-six cases in his practice.

Many of his patients were colored people who had not been vaccinated, and yet they had the disease very lightly; so that it cannot always be attributed to previous vaccination.

He says: "No one has yet satisfactorily accounted for the mildness of our recent cases of variola. Has any explanation been presented of the recent mildness of typhoid fever, scarlatina, and diphtheria? I am quite sure none of these diseases occurs in this locality with the same virulence as in former years."

The mortality, he adds, has been nowhere greater than two per cent. from small-pox, which is much less than that of whooping-cough.

A COAPTATION SPLINT.—S. A. Knopf in the New York *Medical Journal* describes a simple splint of his own contrivance. It consists of a strip of ordinary unbleached muslin long enough to encircle the limb, doubled and sewed into pockets into which strips of light wood are inserted. It can be applied to almost any fracture of the extremity. It can be made by the yard, rolled up, and kept for use. If it is too wide, it can be cut off in a moment; if too long, the wood is removed and the muslin lapped or cut off.

To apply it lay it flat, cover it with cotton, and roll it around the limb, securing it in place with a strap and buckle an inch and a half from each end. No bandage is necessary. As the swelling increases or diminishes the strap can be tightened or loosened.

For a compound fracture remove the wood over the wound, cut a corresponding opening in the muslin, and paste down the edges around the wound with collodion.

ABSORPTION OF ALBUMIN THROUGH THE LARGE INTESTINE.—One of the foreign medical journals reports an experiment to determine whether albuminous substances can be absorbed through the mucous membrane of the large intestine. An enema was administered daily containing thymus gland that had been first

boiled and then cut fine, with the addition of salt and a little laudanum. The patient also received food by the mouth. The method of demonstrating that there had been actual absorption was to estimate the uric acid and phosphates in the urine, since it was shown that these increased in the period during which thymus was given. The experiments decided that there had been an absorption of the albuminous matter, which had caused an increase of uric acid, phosphates, and nitrogen in the urine during the time in which the enemata were given. He believes that this demonstrates that it is possible to administer an important part of the nourishment by means of the bowel.

SUTURING WOUNDS OF THE HEART.—The *Medical News* contains a report of twenty-six cases of wounds of the heart that had been sutured: there were nine recoveries and seventeen deaths. The mortality is necessarily very high, not from the operation but from the injury. It is stated that the time has arrived when a wound of the heart should be operated on with as little hesitation as a wound of the brain, with the expectation under corresponding conditions of getting equally good results.

The importance of asepsis is strongly emphasized on account of the great danger of pericarditis and empyema. If there has been hemorrhage, a quantity of salt solution about equal in amount to the blood lost should be injected into a vein while the surgeon is operating on the heart, if it has not been done before.

SULPHUR IN DYSENTERY.—A correspondent in the *Lancet* highly recommends sulphur in the treatment of dysentery. He thinks that sulphur is an ideal intestinal antiseptic because of its solidity and ease of absorption, and that it can control and cure dysentery.

WOMEN AS MASSEUSES.—Upward of seventy London physicians have expressed their approval of a society recently formed by women which holds periodical examinations in the theory and practice of massage and issues certificates.

QUACK ADVERTISEMENTS.—The *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* has a paper reviewing the evils of quack advertisements and summarizes them as follows: 1. The great life-saving discoveries have been made by quiet and unobtrusive men. 2. Quacks and charlatans have never made any great discoveries in sanitary science, but have always opposed scientific progress and investigation. 3. Antivaccinationists, antivivisectionists, Christian Scientists, and all that class, by opposing preventive sanitary measures and scientific investigation, facilitate the spread of infectious diseases, oppose the stamping out of diseases already established, and impede investigation as to the cause, prevention, and cure of disease. 4. The newspapers, which derive a large part of their revenue from advertising, nearly always espouse the cause of the so-called commercial interests, regardless of the fact whether they are supported by truth and justice, or are opposed to the best interests of the public. This is well illustrated by the recent occurrence of bubonic plague in San Francisco. 5. The boastful pretensions and misrepresentations of quack advertisements (patent medicines) lower the public regard for truth and fair dealing and encourage falsehood and duplicity. 6. The bold and shameless introduction of advertisements calling attention to and suggesting vile, immoral, and even criminal acts debases and demoralizes the young and leads to disease, crime, and degeneration.